

CITY OF SANIBEL

RESOLUTION 08-092

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF SANIBEL DECLARING ITS SUPPORT FOR THE EFFORTS OF GOVERNOR CHARLIE CRIST AND THE SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT TO ACQUIRE LAND SOUTH OF LAKE OKEECHOBEE FOR THE PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF AMERICA'S EVERGLADES AND FLORIDA'S COASTAL ESTUARIES

WHEREAS, America's Everglades and the South Florida ecosystem is a unique expanse of habitats, the environmental health of which is critical to the economy and quality of life of all of Southeast, South and Southwest Florida; and

WHEREAS, on June 24, 2008, Governor Charlie Crist unveiled a momentous strategy to bring about the largest environmental land acquisition in Florida's history and restore America's Everglades in a way never before anticipated; and

WHEREAS, the Governor announced that the South Florida Water Management District will begin negotiating an agreement with United States Sugar Corporation to purchase nearly 300 square miles of land spanning four counties in South Florida; and

WHEREAS, the acquisition of as much as 187,000 acres of land south of Lake Okeechobee would provide the "missing link" needed to better protect the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers and estuaries, and revive, restore and preserve one of America's greatest natural treasures – the Everglades; and

WHEREAS, the South Florida Water Management District and United States Sugar Corporation signed a "Statement of Principles" that provides the framework for the potential acquisition of property and assets; and

WHEREAS, through successful negotiations and strategic land swaps, vast tracts would be used to reestablish a part of the historic connection between Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades through a managed system of storage and treatment; and

WHEREAS, dedicating significantly more land in the Everglades Agricultural Area to restoration will build upon and enhance the 30-year state-federal Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, offering the opportunity and flexibility to store and clean water on a scale never before contemplated; and

WHEREAS, benefits from the land acquisition include huge increases in the availability of water storage, significantly reducing the potential for harmful discharges from Lake Okeechobee to Florida's coastal rivers and estuaries; and

WHEREAS, the acquisition will prevent thousands of tons of phosphorus from entering the Everglades every year and eliminate the need for "back-pumping" water into Lake Okeechobee; and

WHEREAS, the acquisition also provides the potential opportunity to sustain remaining agriculture in the region by eliminating environmental concerns; enhancing the availability of water supply; and fostering green energy production; and

WHEREAS, the Governor has identified the State of Florida's Rural Economic Development Initiative as a resource for working with United States Sugar Corporation, local governments, area businesses, state agencies and the South Florida Water Management District on an economic transition plan for the area; and

WHEREAS, saving the Everglades and protecting Florida's coastal estuaries is an environmental priority for the City of Sanibel and its residents; and

WHEREAS, the South Florida Water Management District's initiative to purchase 187,000 acres of land in the Everglades Agricultural Area is a watershed event for restoring a beloved national treasure – the Everglades;

WHEREAS, the City of Sanibel has repeatedly gone on record of being supportive of significantly improved conveyance and treatment of Lake Okeechobee water south to the Everglades to help reduce the impacts to coastal estuaries;

WHEREAS, the Sanibel City Council continues to support timely implementation of those components of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project (CERP) and Acceler8 projects essential to provide needed water storage, treatment and flows to the south including "modwaters", "decomp", the EAA reservoir and the C-43 reservoir, as well as the continued development and implementation of the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Sanibel also urges that following completion of U.S. Sugar lands acquisition by the SFWMD, lands currently owned by U.S. Sugar within the S-4 Basin and the Disston Water Control District be taken out of agricultural production and retained for the future purpose of excess water storage and treatment rather than being part of an agricultural land swap proposal, in order to help restore water quality in the Caloosahatchee River and downstream estuary;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Sanibel, Florida, that:


SECTION 1. The Sanibel City Council applauds and supports the landmark efforts of Governor Charlie Crist and the South Florida Water Management District to negotiate the acquisition of significant lands in the Everglades Agricultural Area for the purposes of restoring and protecting the northern and southern Everglades and Florida's coastal estuaries.

SECTION 2. A copy of this resolution be forward to the Office of the Governor and to each Board Member of the South Florida Water Management District.

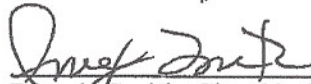
SECTION 3. Effective Date.

This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.


DULY PASSED AND ENACTED by the Council of the City of Sanibel, Florida, this 5th
day of August, 2008.


Mick Denham, Mayor

AUTHENTICATION:


Pamela Smith, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Kenneth B. Cuyler, City Attorney

8/5/08
Date

Vote of Council Members:

Denham	<u>yea</u>
Ruane	<u>yea</u>
Jennings	<u>yea</u>
Johnston	<u>yea</u>
Pappas	<u>excused</u>

Date filed with City Clerk: August 5, 2008